

(d) if so, the time by which it is likely to be constructed; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) No, Sir. There is no plan to construct a separate building for the Central Telegraph Office, Purnea.

(d) Question does not arise.

(e) There is a plan to shift the Central Telegraph Office, Purnea to the Departmental Exchange Building.

Palace on Wheels

2516. SHRI TARACHAND BHAGORA : SHRI PARASRAM MEGHWAL :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the 'Palace on Wheels' train being run on the narrow-gauge line in Gujarat have been incurring losses;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there is any proposal to run it again in Rajasthan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) No narrow gauge tourist train is running in Gujarat Sector by the name of 'Palace on Wheels'.

(b) Does not arise

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

Construction of Over-Bridge

2517. SHRI KESHAB MAHANTA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to construct a Railway Over-bridge at Agthuri between Changsari and Guwahati; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the work is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Road Over Bridge in lieu of level crossing No. SK/2 at km. 8/0-1 between Agthuri and Changsari has been sanctioned during the Works programme of 1996-97 the Plan and Estimate for which are being prepared. The work will be taken up after the state Govt. starts work on approaches.

[Translation]

Research Work in Steel Industry

2518. SHRI NAVAL KISHORE RAI : SHRI NITISH KUMAR :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have made the provision of an expenditure of Rs. 150 crore for undertaking research work in Steel Industry during the current year;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the technology used in steel production in the Country needs much improvement;

(d) if so, the technologies used in China, America, Russia and Japan alongwith the production cost of steel under the technologies separately; and

(e) the extent to which the production cost will be less when the production is undertaken through these technologies in comparison to the technology already being used in India?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The technologies used in the steel production in India need upgradation in many areas. The technology upgradation is a continuous process and the extent of improvement required depends upon the status of technologies in different companies.

As far as Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) is concerned, the company is constantly pursuing various modernisation programmes to suitably upgrade the level of technology in different SAIL plants.

In RINL/VSP, upgradation of technology is required in some of the areas like utilisation of waste energy in sinter plant for energy conservation, incorporation of expert system and computerisation at blast furnace for improving the productivity, incorporation of pulverised Coal Dust Injection and oxygen enrichment to improve the productivity and to reduce the production cost, automation and modernisation of continuous casting machines and introduction of facilities like oil water mist cooling and electro-magnetic stirring for improving the productivity and